

social worker stated that she immediately noted a glistering in the eye of the foster mother who replied, "Is that really what you want, Christopher?" Christopher responded that was very much his desire. The adoption of Christopher was finalized in January 2008 with Christopher changing his name to "Kantrell." Kantrell has continued to thrive in his adoptive home and is a delight to all who know him.

Each year, 79,000 children and youth who exit foster care leave without a permanent home or belonging to a family. I could stand here every day for the next month and talk about each child who needs to be adopted out of foster care. The bottom line is that each of these children, from 1 day old to 22 years old, needs permanency. They all need a loving, nurturing family that will help them to grow, bring out their unique personalities, and transform them into confident and happy adults.

On National Adoption Day, I have faith that we can be the catalyst to securing a permanent loving family for every child. The miracle of adoption cannot be explained, but the loving parents who are holding their children for the first time today are living examples of how dreams can be realized. As an adoptive mother myself, I find that words cannot adequately explain the miracle of adoption. I can only take a moment to offer my most humble thanks, gratitude, and appreciation to all those across the Nation who have given their Saturday to help find waiting children safe and loving homes.

Let us continue to remember that when National Adoption Month and Day end there are still thousands of children who need that sense of permanency. I challenge Congress to make these children their first priority and not another statistic to be studied. Please join us in supporting National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month by participating in events held across the country celebrating this most joyous, hopeful act.

#### HIGHER EDUCATION LOANS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, this past August the President signed into law the Higher Education Opportunity Act which reauthorized programs for postsecondary and higher education. Contained within the reauthorization is the Education Disaster and Emergency Relief Loan Program. The bill established a loan program within the U.S. Department of Education to provide critically needed low-interest guaranteed loans to institutions in the event of catastrophic natural or man-made disasters.

The colleges and universities in Louisiana, particularly those in the New Orleans area, remain in many ways financially crippled by Hurricane Katrina. Three years after Katrina and Rita devastated Louisiana and Mississippi these institutions still have nearly \$700 million in unrecovered losses. The estimates for Gustav and

Ike are still not finalized, but at this stage the damage is purported to be at least \$46 million to State colleges and universities alone.

Before Katrina, the 11 colleges and universities in the New Orleans area educated 70,000 students. Today, that number is only 50,000, but it continues to slowly rebound. This growth comes despite the fact that our institutions of higher education experienced more than \$1 billion in physical damages and operational losses due to the 2005 hurricanes and have recovered less than half of those losses. Higher education institutions are the largest employers in New Orleans both before and after Katrina. The higher education industry in New Orleans continues to attract millions of research dollars and supports industries as diverse as biotechnology, aerospace, and medicine. The work of each institution in the city can be seen in every aspect of the region's recovery, from the redesign of the city's troubled public schools to coastal restoration and hurricane protection to the provision of health care across the region. They engage in this important work even as they continue to struggle with mounting revenue losses, buildings that remain in disrepair due to flooding, and the loss of key faculty and staff.

I call today on the Secretary of Education to make the Education Disaster Loan Program a top regulatory priority. It is my understanding that some Department of Education officials have said that they will not promulgate regulations on any newly created programs in the Higher Education Act until funds are appropriated. This simply is not acceptable. This issue has become a major roadblock in the current disaster funding process, and it is my hope that the Secretary and the Department will move expeditiously to establish regulations so that the program may provide crucial assistance to the colleges and universities impacted by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, and the Midwest floods.

#### PRIVACY PROTECTIONS—S. 2321

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to announce that, today, after several discussions, the Bush administration and lead sponsors of the E-Government Reauthorization Act of 2008, S. 2321, have accepted an amendment I have drafted to ensure that Americans' privacy comes first when the Government purchases and uses their most sensitive personal information. My amendment requires that Federal agencies must conduct privacy impact assessments before employing outside contractors that use and market Americans' sensitive personal data.

The addition of privacy protections to the E-Government Reauthorization Act will help to better protect all Americans from the growing threats of data breaches, identity theft, and other cyber crimes. I am particularly pleased about the compromise reached today

because I am a proud supporter of this bill. In 2002, I was an original cosponsor of E-Government Act, and in the intervening years, I have worked to promote and strengthen this law.

The E-Government Reauthorization Act is a good bill that will now be even better because of the privacy protections added by my amendment. Recently, the Government Accountability Office released a report on lessons learned about the Government data breaches at the Veterans' Administration and elsewhere. That report found that Government contractor responsibilities for preventing and responding to data breaches should be clearly defined. My amendment takes a small but important step toward addressing the growing problem of lax data security by Government contractors by making sure that Americans' privacy rights are not compromised when they entrust their sensitive personal information to our Government.

I thank the lead sponsors of this bill for working with me on compromise privacy language for this bill. I also thank the many stakeholders who support this bill and my privacy amendment, including the Center for Democracy and Technology, Symantec, and the Cyber Security Industry Alliance.

I urge all Senators to support and pass this important legislation.

#### HONORING MARYLAND'S OLYMPIANS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today I rise to honor and congratulate Maryland's Olympic athletes for their performance in the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games. These dedicated, disciplined, and accomplished athletes are a source of great pride to Maryland and the country. Therefore, it is with great enthusiasm that I commend:

Freddy Adu of Montgomery County, 2008 men's soccer team; Carmel Anthony of Baltimore, 2008 men's basketball team; David Banks of Potomac, 2008 men's Olympic rowing team; Maurice Edu of College Park, 2008 men's soccer team; Jun Gao of Montgomery County, 2008 women's table-tennis team; Georgia Gould of Baltimore, 2008 women's cycling team; Kathryn Hoff of Towson, 2008 women's Olympic swimming team; Gao Jun of Gaithersburg, 2008 men's Olympic table tennis team; Bobby Lea of Talbot County, 2008 men's Olympic cycling team; Mechelle Lewis of Prince George's County, 2008 women's track & field team; Jessica Long of Baltimore, 2008 Paralympics swimming team; Khan Bob Malaythong of Rockville, 2008 men's Olympic badminton team; Tatyana McFadden of Howard County, 2008 Paralympic wheelchair racing; Scott Parsons of Montgomery County, 2008 men's canoe and kayak team; Michael Phelps II of Baltimore, 2008 men's Olympic swimming team; Lauren Powley of the University of Maryland, 2008 women's field hockey team; Dina Rizzo of the University of Maryland, 2008 women's field